754 [647] Spitting or coughing blood (which may be tuberculosis) is regarded as another sure symptom of buda, especially the demon "wiggam". The buda is believed to cause widespread epidemics, if he is powerful and many vulnerable victims are in the area.

776 754 Certain buda are believed to have very specialized "educated" tastes. One likes to rob the voice of debtara choristers who chants harmoniously in church (perhaps in revenge for the same debtara's part-time, extracurricular activity as exorciser), whereupon the voice will begin to croak and steadily grow worse, until the singer cannot even carry a tune. When a cow gradually [825] stops giving milk, despite a big udder, this is ascribed to the special taste of an "educated" buda.

c. Diagnosis, Treatment and Prognosis

755 [753] Sometimes the victim declares that he has had a dream in which a certain suspected person, e.g. an ironsmith, has been "eating" him. This can become very dangerous for the accused.

The question which diagnosis has to solve is not "what's eating you?", but "who is eating you?"; for the buda spirit and sorcerer are one person.

When the exorciser appears, the "buda" reacts violently. Even apathetic patients suddenly break out in violent peals of laughter, howl like a hyena, crawl about on all fours. The exorciser begins to question the "buda" to find out his personal identity. The "buda" replies through the mouth of the victim, in a hoarse voice, which is attested by all Amhara onlookers as "not the normal voice of the victim". The diagnostic procedure is a battle of wits between the exorciser and the "buda". The

latter tries to evade, first through deliverate misinformation, then by removing himself physically. He does this by calming his victim, who says that there is nothing wrong with him, that he merely wants to go out a moment. But everyone knows this is just to lure the victim outside, make him stumble in the darkness and, brought to a fall, devour him at leisure. Consequently, the patient is tied up "to prevent escape of the buda". But every time a hyena howls, the patient tries to break loose to join his "brethren".

Forceful means in the diagnosis may include nearly choking the patient to put pressure on the buda to reveal himself or risk the premature death of his victim. A smoky fire is made of mule dung, the patient is held over it, togas are piled on top of him to prevent the smoke from dissipating. Naturally, the patient begins to choke and cough, but he is not released until he begs cessation of this ordeal with Christian formulae such as "sela Maryam" (for Mary's sake). This indicates that the buda is surrendering and ready to cooperate. To qualch the spirit even more, strong herbs are smalled and the exorciser may insult the buda in the most vulgar and obscene terms. This rattles the buda ("alläffalläñ", lit. he talked disconnected nonsense), so that he cannot develop a defensive strategy. Finally, at the threat of further punishment, the buda gives a name.

The treatment consists of negotiation to cast the buda out entirely. The buda is asked what his demands are. The first request is usually something very difficult to obtain, or something very filthy, e.g. "food" consisting of dung of donkey or even hyena.

755 Serious cases sometimes evidence utter self-abasement, but this impresses the audience as a sign of a genuine, sincere case. Finally, the exorciser negotiates a date at which the buda will leave, usually not more than a week later. Unlike the zar, the buda is made to swear that he will not return.

The next step in treatment is to make certain that the buda [756] will not return. Often the sacrifice of a black chicken is made. the animal, still alive, is turned around the head of the victim, until the greedy buda enters the body of the chicken. Then the chicken is rapidly smashed to the ground. If it dies at once, it is a good omen that the buda has accepted the transfer, the substitute, and is leaving. Another good omen is the release of the exorciser is a debtara, he says:

> "I command you, buda, in the name of the holy Trinity, the 12 apostles and the 318 bishops of the Council (of Nicea) to leave this person".

If the buda responds, he leaves with a flourish, such as showing his strength for the last time by causing his victim to pick up a huge rock, which would normally take several men to lift; then leaving the victim in a faint. To scare the buda further off, rifles may be discharged at this time. Often the patient is beaten severely, even wounded in the hip with a spear, "to let the buda escape"; this also makes things unpleasant and prevents a renewed attack.

When the victim recovers from his faint, he is asked his name, and gives his usual name. This is proof that he is "himself again". He claims to have no memory of what went on during the attack. As further proof of recovery the patient may be asked to pronounce

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

755 certain Christian words which the buda fears. Some also slaughter a sheep or fowl, eat it roasted, then burn the bones so as not to attract the buda again.

Sometimes a reluctant buda is transferred bodily to a spot on a trail outside the hamlet. There a root of a bush is twisted - the signature of the buda and expression of his greedy intent. Whoever passes unprotected is pounced on by the hungry buda.

755 789 Written amulets (ketab") are hung on the neckcord or around the waist to assure successful prognosis. The writing and sale of these amulets is one of the most common extracurricular activities of the dabtara scribe and often his most lucrative income-producing work. Hence the dabtara is feared, for he can use his power for good or ill. The amulets contain such formulas as "besem Aw, Wold, M'ənfəs Qeddus" (In the name of the Father, Son, Holy Ghost); mystic names of archangels; formulas in Amharic, Geez, even Arabic of sorts. Church scholars with the title "mämhər" (professor) are believed to be able to write even more powerful amulets, for it is believed that God gave 1000 special "medicines" to Jesus on Christmas (a sort of birthday gift) and that Jesus and the angels taught these "medicines" to the mämhər. Another advantage of their amulets is that the mämhər are never suspected of using their power for ill. In either case, the name of the person to be protected is written in the amulet; so that it cannot be transferred or sold without erasure and the new name.

159 754 As noted, women in the age group 15 to 30 are the most often struck. The following case was observed by the author in the town of Gondar. The patient was a 27 year old married woman, Zewditu Bogale (her first name meant "Queenie"). She was the mother of

158 Sometimes cases of buda possession are brought in to the
159 government hospital at Gondar where two European physicians are in charge. They have diagnosed the shrieking, wildly beating type of case as "hysteria"; and the apathetic type of buda case as "catalepsy". In the latter case they have observed absence of reflex responses on eye and knee, almost no pulse, faint heart-beat, low blood pressure; sometimes a stupor in which the patient has no control over bowel movements and urinating. In severe cases of this kind there is a suspension of sensation and will, and muscles are so rigid that limbs keep any position they are placed in by the doctor.

●755 In one memorable case, a hysteria patient, a man, had been gradually quieted by a Coptic Amhara priest called in by the European doctors at the hospital, who knew the effectiveness of this from past experience. All the priest had done was to hold the hand of the patient and quietly recite prayers in the Geez language, (which the lay patient could not understand). When the priest tired of this, the regular hospital priest was called in to continue this "treatment". But at sunrise the next morning the patient had disappeared out the window. The hospital "dressers" (male, semi-trained nurses) explained that the patient probably would go a long distance from this area, to escape the severe beating his kinfolk would give him - the "post-operative" treatment meted out to patients recovering from buda possession to "discourage the buda from returning".

755 In the rural areas the "tanqway" is still sometimes called
756 in to treat buda cases, though this is not his major specialty. He is what has been called a "witch-doctor", professional sorcerer, and diviner. He usually treats the patient by frightening the

755 buda out of him: seating the patient in ashes - the natural
756 abode of the buda - to entice the evil spirit to leave through the anus. The latter is regarded as the preferred pathway of the buda - the opposite principle of the soul which is believed to leave through the head. Sometimes the tanqway orders that the person accused of buda sorcery be brought before him and made to spit upon the patient, which breaks the spell if he has actually cast it. Since 1942 the government has branded the "tänqway" as a fraud. As a result, the business of the still respectable däbtära and also the woggesha has increased in treating cases of buda.

C. Evil-Spirit Disease ("ganyën") and the diviner ("täñqwar")

756 776 While the aforementioned täñqway is, or used to be, called in occasionally to exorcise a buda, his major specialties are the exorcising of "ganyën" evil spirits who have a very different character, and the divining of lost or stolen goods.

Of all spirit doctors, the täñqway occupies the lowest social position. He is "uneducated" for he uses no books and in fact is almost always illiterate. His methods are nearly identical with those of African "witch-doctors" and include such methods as throwing of bones and animal parts, for divining.

776 777 The major principle of both the täñqway diviner and the ganyën spirits he specialized in, seem to be regional; the activity one of geographical orientation. For the ganyën, considered inferior to zar and buda spirits in power, are localized, evil genies. The term itself is etymologically related to the Arabic "djinn", local evil genies, though actually derived from the Geez "janyen"), and the concept is also similar: most ganyen are either water-spirits or fire-spirits.

682 manslaughter of an average citizen, killed e.g. in an automobile
754 accident, or by a trigger-happy policeman, at "semanya" on its present monetary level.

755 Other types of ganyen disease are forms of epilepsy, "haut mal", referred to by the Amhara as "ganyën yazï" (lit. the ganyen has seized him; plural is "aganent". In this case, a dabtara is often called in and tries to exorcise the evil spirit with magic formulae; sometimes the woggesha doctor tries to intoxicate the patient with
[278] a paste of "assärkush täbbätäbkush" (Cissus adenautha), which drug finally lets him have some rest. In contrast, the method of the täñqway is literally a bag of tricks.

755 In his role as magician, the täñqway is called "quämä" (from
756 "qoämä", he stood up), for he tries to identify the personality of
789 the evil spirit from his abode; e.g. in the water of a brook, or a waterhole in the river, or under a certain tree, etc. The magician is also considered an expert on fire and lightning. When a person is struck by lightning, "mäbräq" (lit. Thunder),
[761] the priests consider it heavenly punishment and in the past even refused to bury the victim in the churchyard; thus the täñqway is called in. His treatment consists of moving the victim quickly to the fireplace - for he regards fire and warm ashes as the counteracting principle. If a house is on fire in town, it is still believed that the magician, standing on the roof of a neighboring house with a mirror, can prevent the spreading of the fire by causing the flames to recoil.

Cases of drowning are his specialty also. This too is considered by the church a heavenly punishment for hidden crimes, for the victim is regarded as having been surrendered to the "demons";

755 and the worst and most numerous ganyen are regarded as water spirits,
756 e.g. at the Blue Nile and everywhere also during the long rainy
789 season.
[776]

After diagnosing the identity and origin of the specific
755 ganyen, the tänqway tries to exorcise the demon by treating him
776 with contempt (exactly opposite to treatment given the "zar"). Instead of feeding the spirit a succulent "mäqwädäshä" (love gift), the ganyen - possessed person is fed a lunch of ashes. For a ganyen that is a fire-spirit, is attracted by ashes, his element, and may thus be induced to leave the body of the patient in order to feast. The tänqway follows this method even in cases of buda as indicated before.

The next step in treatment consists of "fixing" the ganyen somewhere else, so that he will not return into the body of the victim. This is done by the scapegoat technique; e.g. by fixing the demon into the body of a chicken, killing it, throwing the carcass away where the hyenas will eat it; or transferring the water-spirit to another locality.

756 Besides his role as a healer of ganyen, the major activity
[787] of the tänqway is as diviner of lost or stolen goods. It is not polite to use the term "tänqway" in his presence, instead he is politely addressed as "awaqi" (lit. knower, wise man). Since he usually makes it his business to know what goes on among professional thieves, his insight into such matters is sometimes indeed considerable; but also contributes to his bad social reputation. In "diag-
[694] nosing" the case, the tanqway acts as detective, studies the place of the crime, investigates neighbors and finally draws seashells (zagol Lebsu") and bones from his bag and throws them, to read additional information from their direction and mutual position.

773 On the way he found an old witch. Interrogating her, St. Susneyos
789 learned that Werzelya had gone into a garden. Finally, he found the demon sitting under a tree. He speared and mortally wounded her. Before expiring she promised never to afflict anyone who carried the inscribed name of Saint Susneyos.

The effectiveness of the amulet lies therefore in reminding the female demon of her promise to Susneyos.

789 Other common designs include angels with fiery swords (sometimes seen also incised upon wooden church doors); the cross over sun and moon; and the evil eye, sometimes oval, sometimes in profile, but often round with a red iris (symbolizing the magic drinking of blood).

A typical formula against the demon of epilepsy, "barya", reads as follows:

> "You (actually "he", polite), Barya, who steals the heart of man (i.e. renders insane),
> who darkens the eye,
> who comes as shadow by nighttime,
> I put a spell on you, and curse you by ...(name of saint or angel)."

776 There are three common categories in the cosmology of demon
753 diseases treated by amulets:
755

(1) General evil-eye disease, referred to generically as "buda" - particularly in cases of puzzling functional and mental ailments - or identified and diagnosed by the name of a demon - particularly in fevers and paralysis.

(2) The demons of epilepsy, "Barya".

(3) Gynecological ailments, ascribed to specific female demons.

Amulets are collectively referred to as "ketab" (lit. writings, in Geez).

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Table 13: The Scribe as Healer: Demons, their Individual Specialities, Exorcism.

category	name of demon	demonic character	demonic disease specialty	demon's affiliation or symbol	syncretism (other demons)	dabtara amulet and counteracting principle
(1)	"Buda"	evil eye	fevers (mech mättaw); functional ailments; hysteria, catalepsy	eye with bloody-red iris; ironsmith ethnics		powerful amulet; Christian re-baptising of patient: exorcism
(1)	"Mägäna"	threshhold demon in early mourning	spitting blood (tuberculosis) through "red snake in belly". Amebic dysentery.		Buda	amulet of St. Sebastian as prophylactic smoke of "wogärt" plant which snake hates, in hut. Carry dead through hole in wall (in Gojjam), so demon cannot find way back to infect others in family. Spraying with holy water.
(1)	"Däŋgara Mätal"	household demon	infectious disease, highly contageous within hut. (Endangers travellers.)			amulet as prophylactic. Lure demon out of the hut through trail of chicken feathers, lemons and perfume, onto trail, where it is transferred to travellers.
(1)	"Nädara", "Aynät"	evil eye, female demon	eye diseases, esp. ophthalmia	red eyes	Buda	amulet recalling Jesus breaking the spell of this demon

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category	name of demon	demonic character	demonic disease specialty	demon's affiliation or symbol	syncretism (other demons)	dabtara amulet and counteracting principle
(1)	"Ayna Tɔla" (lit. Shadow Eye)	evil eye, female demon	blocks projects; blocks learning of students; causes sleepwalking; likes to attack men. Confuses protective zar spirits so they cannot help.		Zar	amulet "tesherta hebuat". intoxicant plant "esa fars" (see Zar).
(1)	"Eqabe Seray"	evil eye, male demon	Various mischief; can turn himself into human figure	Non-Copt neighbors; Barya, ironsmith ethnics	Buda	Christian amulet.
(1)	"Dabbas"	Household demon	undefined illness and death; "aroused when thirsty"			Christian amulet.
(2)	"Barya"	dancing demons; their chief "Legewon" has red eyes and is "buda"	epilepsy, haut mal ("hamama barya"), esp. in male victims.	Barya tribe of Nilotic lowlands. Symbol: tornado	Zar, Buda	Amulet with angel of fiery sword (Christian).
(2)	"Tegrida"	restless demon	epilepsy, petit mal; causes "falling-down sickness"			Christian amulet.

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954) 1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

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category	name of demon	demonic character	demonic disease specialty	affiliation of demon's; or symbol	syncretism (other demons)	dabtara amulet and counteracting principle
(3)	"Werselya"	female demon	attacks women: barreness through stopped menstruation which "prevents conception", 'yädan tefat); bleeding from uterus (menorrhagia); miscarriage.	Barya tribe negress		amulet with legend of her promise to Saint Susneyos. It is suspended from the Christian neckcord "mätib".
(3)	"Karina"	female demon	attacks women who have just given birth (puerperal fever).			amulet recalling her defeat at the hands of King Solomon.
(3)	"Shotälay"	female demon, subordinate.	causes stillbirth		Zar	exorcism
(3)	"Tegertoya", "Teggerta", "Kaddegeni"	female demon	attacks women after childbirth through puerperal fever or catalepsy (postnatal depression).		Zar, Buda	prophylactic amulet; quiet cooperation with Zar doctor who tries cajoling the spirit through the patient (See zar).

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5
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1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

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•755 5. Summary of the däbtära's syncretism in healing the spirit.

It is clear from the above that a number of ancient spirit cosmologies have contributed to, and survived in, Amhara healing practices: Ancient Egyptian, Greek, Hebrew, Arab, Christian, and African. In fact, the syncretism has been so complex, for so many centuries, that it would be impossible to trace all the roots, with any degree of valid certainty. However, several traces do stand out and their eticlogy bears significantly on present function.

The book "Lafafa Tsedeq" of the Coptic Abyssinian Church (lit. Book of Righteous Life, in Geez), contains spells and formulae attributed to Jesus Christ and Mary, but actually showing influences
764 from the Egyptian "Book of the Dead". Its function among the Amhara is entirely in the context of funerals and funeral mass during memorial services.

Much of the Greek-Byzantine influence may have entered directly at the time Abyssinia was christianized; but more came via Arabic, later. This includes patches of Greek mythology, legends in connection with the New Testament, and traces of the astrological work of claudius Ptolemy (about 150 A.D. in origin), known in the West as Almagest". 123

Hebrew influence is most commonly encountered with reference to the mystic powers of King Solomon, who occupies about the same role in Amhara spirit cosmology as in Jewish mythology (Kabala). Amhara amulets refer, e.g. to the "fishnet of Solomon", in wich he could catch demons as readily as a fisherman catches fish in the rainy season. The powers of archangels, e.g. Fenuël, Gabriël, etc., are very similar to Jewish cabalistic ideas, 124

123. See Strelcyn, S: Un magicien grec en Ethiopie. Journal Asiatique, 1951, p. 175-192
124. Walker, John: Folk Medicines in Modern Egypt. London 1934.

177 The "seal of Solomon" (actually the 6-pointed Star of David) often
755 appears on Amhara amulets (e.g. against Karina). Even Hebrew-
789 appearing characters are found on amulets (a widespread custom in the Middle East.) [125] As might be expected, Hebrew traits are even more emphasized among the Falashas, who begin every amulet with: "Blessed be the God of Israel, God of all Creatures; prayer against.....".

Arabic influence has served primarily as a carrier. Directly derived from the Arabs are the 12 signs of the Zodiac, found on Abyssinian amulets. Carried was the "seal of Alexander".

Christian mythology and hagiology predominates in the cosmology of the amulets of the dabtara. Many of them begin with the formula: "In the name of the Father, the Son, the Holy Ghost, one Divinity; prayer against.....". Deniers of Christ who are suspected as sorcerers, are often personified in these amulets as Falasha or Barya. Christian martyrs and saints, Abyssinian or "from Jerusalem", are appealed to for intercession against demons. The following are frequently encountered in amulets:

776 Abuna (bishop) Batra Maryam, Abyssinian saint, against snakebite (pro-
177 phylactic); St. George, "Qeddus Giyorgis", shown spearing a monster
755 (an old idea possibly dating to the Bel-Marduk battle among ancient Babylonians, and Ra and Horus in ancient Egypt).

St. Sebastian is often depicted in drawings, and appealed to against the Kagana and other threshhold demons. To keep out disease and
[751] evil, this amulet is often placed above the entrance to a hut; but not in the doorway itself, if someone inside is already sick, for this would block the exit of the demon.

125. Reich, Sigismund: Quatre Coups Magiques. Bulletin d'Etudes Orientales, Vol. 7-8, pp. 159-175. Institut Francais de Damas, 1937-8.

171 754 Amhara, and evil witchcraft feared by the geographically close Nilotic Azande. This is not surprising, since contact with the "Barya" people of the Nilotic Sudan is well known. In Azande society, persons who are "socially undesirable" are suspected of sorcery, but never the nobles and the rich.[130] Among the Amhara, too, [554] no "tellaq sew" (great man, noble, rich) is likely to be accused as a "buda" sorcerer, while socially low-class groups doing the despised work of ironsmithing are immediately suspected when a "buda" case arises. In both societies, Azande and Amhara, such suspicion leads to prompt interrogation of the suspect, and revenge by the kinfolk of the victim. In this type of magic, social significance, i.e. ethnic relations in Amhara territory, is considerable.

177 755 Amhara healing of the spirit is psychological, in the first place of significance. In the second place of significance is the enormous syncretism, among linguistic, ethnic, religious and racial components of the art of healing. It presents one of the few outlets for "free enterprise" available in the Amhara tradition. It is this cultural syncretism over the centuries, which, despite the political isolation of Abyssinia, has maintained and developed the spirited character of the Amhara peasant.

130. Evans-Pritchard, E.E.: Witchcraft, Oracles and Magic among the Azande. London 1937.

8: Rey G-5 (1910-1920)1935
MP5 Amhara MP5

did not move at once into his other house some miles away he would die. So on a bitterly cold night the poor old gentleman was removed to his other place, a course of action which, needless to say, resulted in his death. 181

They still believe in the efficacy of writing the sick person's name on a certain kind of tree; and one of our friends told me that his own "boy" had done this when he (my friend) was ill, and attributed his recovery entirely to this cause. Another European who was very ill was cured (so said his "boy") by the latter obtaining from a native priest a piece of paper upon which the sick man's name was written. The "boy" had actually paid the priest the (for him) very large sum of three dollars for the paper. 155

And yet another example that came to my notice was that of a "boy" in the employ of a friend of mine who was suffering from lung trouble and was being attended, quite successfully, by a European doctor. As the "boy" did not think he was getting well fast enough he called in his priest, who advised him to swallow a cupful of petrol! Needless to say, the result was death.

So that in point of fact the Abyssinian priest does not appear to differ very much from the South African witch-doctor, and indeed of the two I should be inclined to give pride of place to the latter, so far as medical practice is concerned at all events.

[pp. 198–end have not been processed for the files.– Analyst]

252 262 the last a few minutes before the wot is ready. Some add capsicum at the same time.

Liver and stomach, especially of sheep and goat, are eaten, but spleen and milt are considered hard to digest and are given to dogs. In general, interior organs are not prestigeful.

Raw beef, "brundo", is still featured at special feasts such as weddings, religious feasts like "täzkär", [64] as it was featured at feasts of warriors in the past. This brings much tapeworm infection, but the risk is taken because it is believed that "brundo" makes strong like no [755] other food. The painful purgative cure is undergone every two months with "kosso", still a major institution among the Amhara.

To cool the palate linings and tongue from the bärbärē, curdled milk, "ergo", is consumed right afterwards. [515] Hands are carefully washed, for touching the eyes with fingers stained from the spiced stew makes them smart.

Fish, much eaten only in the rainy season, is also boiled in wot, often after slight prefrying in talba (linseed oil); lentils (mesr) are often added.

Lentils become very important in the long lenten season and on every Wednesday and Friday, when the average [784] Amhara still abstains from meat, milk, eggs and other animal products, for religious (Coptic fast) reasons. The staple food during these periods is a porridge called "shero": mashed peas seasoned with spices, onion and vegetable oil.

Another vegetarian staple is "nefro", consisting of peas, chick peas, sorghum, all boiled and eaten as ker-

795 led by a comparatively tolerant and rarely learned clergy, even loyal and observant Abyssinian Christians frequently follow practices of other religions without being ostracized or even criticized.

755 In the middle of the preparations for "Mäsqäl", the Feast of the Cross, emotionally ill or despondent patients believed to be possessed by an "evil" Zar or "Buda" spirit, are taken by their relatives into the incipient sunshine and deposited at a spot where trails form a crossroad. A doctor of the "Zar" religious cult (see later description) performs incantations, using incense to lure the Zar. Then a chicken is slaughtered, with the Christian formula pronounced over it. This cure is believed to be particularly effective if the Zar spirit is a Coptic Christian himself, who will then feed on the properly slaughtered chicken and leave the patient alone.

796 795 On Fassika, the Coptic Easter, Ethiopian Muslims living in Coptic provinces have an equivalent feast, in which many Coptic Christian women andd small children passively participate only a few hours after they have returned home from all-night prayers at the church. Even more curious is the fact that this particular Ethiopian-Muslim holy day celebrated near Gonder the day of a Muslim saint called "Sheykh Abäder", is celebrated according to the Coptic, not the Muslim, calendar. (There is a parallel to such calendar syncretism in Egypt, where the founder of a dervish order, Ahmed il-Badawi, is celebrated at his tomb according to the Coptic calendar.[78]

78. Littmann, E.: Ahmed il-Badawi; ein Lied auf den ägyptischen Nationalheiligen. Akad. Wiss. u. Lit., Mainz, 1950, No. 3.

776 kingdom. The hyena ("jeb") is regarded as acting sometimes as the
825 "horse" of the evil spirit or human sorcerer, sometimes as a werewolf-
like creature, when the evil spirit or human sorcerer assumes its form
at night, or makes use of its powerful, hypnotic eyes to "draw the
[753] blood" magically from the living victim. The concept of the magical
hyena is much used in diagnosis and treatment of mental ailments. It
is the most common wild animal, seen and heard at night, and the holes
it burrows under fresh human graves are regarded as visible evidence
of the character of the hyena. The fear in which the spiritual world
is held is symbolized in the hyena; it is whispered about in connection
with suspected ethnic craft groups such as the smiths; or shouted out
loud in military unison ("yahahalal jebo") in challenge.

825 Aspects of the animal world which cause great "wonderment" among
homespun Amhara "shemagalye" philosophers are types of animal behavior
that seem so human. "Bird language" is given a variety of popular
interpretations (footnote 102). Baboons, which are a constant
annoyance and therefore familiar, are wondered about in part because
of their human-like social organization headed by "great man" chiefs
("gamare").

But it is a great insult to call a person a "creature of Thursday"
(when animals were created, according to the Bible).

186 B. Amhara Ideas about Human Races and Amhara Ethnocentrism.
829 The dualism of the Amhara culture pattern rules also their view
of the human races with which they are familiar, and their own

Footnote 102 - Leslau: Popular Interpretations of Bird Sounds in Ethiopia.
Journal of American Folklore, 1952, Vol. 65,
pp. 361-4.

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

178 This attitude is of course deplored by the Western physicians who know
757 of it. But modern medical treatment is still little available outside the major towns. Patients come to hospitals often only as a last resort, fearing to be separated from kinfolk and exposed to treatment by strangers, so that mortality in hospitals is high, which reinforces
[743] the fears. At present there are probably no more than 50 hospitals in all Ethiopia, and only a few hundred Western physicians. Both are heavily concentrated in Addis Ababa, so that the field of the "woggesha" has not shrunk at all.

164 B. Common Ailments and their Treatment.

757 The more common ailments and procedures followed by the "woggesha"
756 and "dabtara", (practitioners who occasionally overlap in specialties
755 but almost never in treatment), include the following (see next page):

753 An important part of diagnosis is the decision whether an ailment is contagious ("fera") or not, and whether it is inherited, congenital ("quranna") or not. If inherited, marriages with such families are despised as not "attentam" (good stock), the same term used for descent from slaves or other "race" or both.

759 In general, the woggesha is most often called in organic ailments;
757 shares with the "dabtara" the practice of functional ailments; while the latter shares with the "zar" doctor the treatment of mental ailments.

2. Healing the Spirit

794 A. The "Zar" cult of supernatural spirits, its institution and cosmology.

755 One of the most complex developments of Amhara non-material culture, to which a great deal of mental ingenuity is devoted, is the healing of mental ailments. But this goes far beyond treatment and cure. The "zar" doctors do not limit themselves to treating some of the aforementioned mental ailments. They organise the afflicted, before, during and after "cure", into "zar" societies, which bear the earmarks of a religious cult, and to which the individual belongs henceforth until his or her (more often her) death. Here he finds the warm companionship of the fellow-afflicted; opportunity for expressive behavior; the religious feeling of having been of service; the personal attention of a personal possessive and protective spirit; and the visible leadership of the "zar" doctor who heads the organizational unit.

794 The zar doctor often a matriarch, differs only in degree from
756 her flock; for she, too, must be possessed, must be forever afflicted by spirits. But she has managed to learn to control them, call upon her more powerful protective spirits to aid her against evil spirits,

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

X794 more tricky but less powerful than hers. This enables her to relieve
756 the sufferings of her clients; without, however, curing them. For a possessive spirit can be turned into an asset - into a protective spirit once the spirit's demands are known and regularly fulfilled. Why should anyone wish to reject such a protective spirit who helps solve the problems of life and even "beautifies the face" with an inner glow? Only a few hopelessly evil demons, mostly female, need to be exorcised.

X794 Women, otherwise limited in cultural participation among the Amhara,
562 particularly in the church institution where their expressive behavior and opportunity for service are almost entirely rejected, constitute a considerable majority in the zar societies, even in the top leadership; so that many men think of the zar cult as predominantly feminine, and consult zar doctors by stealth only, at night. Men have ambivalent feelings about their wives attendance: they are often jealous of the "possessive" spirit; object to the financial outlays demanded by the "zar" spirit on pain of "relapse" into the patient's catatonic, schizoid or hysterical state; object to their wives being at the doctor's hut all night during worship-sessions; but admit that their wives are thereafter easier to live with, indeed more beautiful when the "wəqābi" (inspiration) "is on their face".

[182] Thus the "zar" institution affects many other Amhara institutions: Marriage and the Family; Religion; Economics; Ethnic Relations; and even linguistics.

X794 The psychological attitude in Amhara culture which emphasizes the
●755 aspect of possession in love, and in other intense human relations, has
[832] already been pointed out in connection with "love magic", which attempts, instead of arousing love in the partner, to render him or her submissive.

x 794 In the zar cult, there is no attempt to win the love of the spirit,
755 or to love him or her in turn; rather it is a game of cajoling, tricking, bribing the patient out of the condition of total submission into one of partial control; and then forever renting one's mortgaged mental health through permanent financial payments. But there is the added recompense of gaining an invisible protector, who, as financial partner, has a permanent interest in the success of the partnership; plus the recompense of the human fellowship.

x 794 According to the mythology of the "zar"cult, the "zar" spirits
773 originated in the Biblical Garden of Eden at the same time man was
776 created. They assumed physical form when Eve began to bear children. Eve is believed to have had 30 children. One day, when God the Creator came to visit, and began to count the children, Eve (evidently fearing the evil eye), hid the 15 most beautiful ones. God, being all-knowing, realized this, and became angry. As punishment, He decreed that the 15 hidden children always remain hidden, invisible, night creatures, for all eternity. The present-day zar spirits are believed descended from them. The "zar" spirits are more powerful and more beautiful than man, know remedies for all ailments, but envy their uglier and weaker human brothers and sisters who are "daytime" children of the light. Some "zar" spirits have thus become malevolent, though many can be cajoled and bribed into "forgiveness" (a word much used in the cult ceremony). Others are inclined to be benevolent, and, if their pity is touched, may reveal secret remedies, in dreams or during possession, e.g. to a mother for her sick child.

X 794 Every zar has an individual name and personality. Thus, one of
796 the first tasks of the "zar doctor" is to diagnose. This is done in a
● 755 variety of complex procedures: "Playing along" with the spirit's desires expressed through the mouth of the actions of the possessed; or, in case of intermittent possession, a cult session during which the "zar" is lured to re-possess and re-inhabit the body of the patient, in public, where the zar doctor can observe every phase of the sequence of possession, and thus, on the basis of long experience, detect the peculiarities of the particular "zar" spirits. Once identified, gradual and limited "control" of the particular spirit can then be established, and a "modus vivendi" created.

a) <u>The "Zar" doctor: patients; procedures of healing; basic "zar" personalities.</u>

X 794 The work of the "zar" doctor consists of three parts: identifying
755 the spirit who "rides" the patient "like a monkey" (the same metaphor used by drug addicts in Western countries, e.g. in the movie "Man with the Golden Arm"); after this diagnosis follows the "cultivation", negotiation, establishment of friendly relations with the spirit (treatment); finally the establishment of life-long protective cult relationships (prognosis; socio-mental hygiene).

X 794 The boundary line between the chronic "zar" patient and the "zar"
756 doctor is regarded as a thin one. Both are referred to as "bala zar" (lit. mastered by the zar). Both are equally "possessed", by one or several spirits, but the healer has turned his weakness into a profession, by learning more and more about the various spirits; the types of patients; how to achieve some control over the situation instead of being controlled by it or even destroyed by it. The doctor

X794 756 "zar" is a Muslim, is covered with a flaming-colored turban. Unlike other Amhara men, he wears an ear-ring, of bright metal, in one ear. He seems absent-minded, distracted inward-looking, greets no one. However, when greeted, he may reply with a tirade, in "zar" language. Sometimes he claims to have just returned from a magical voyage, e.g. to have just visited the home country of a visiting foreigner, so that he knows all about it.

X794 756 755 Male zar doctors often develop a sharp, staring or shrewd Mephistophelian look, so that their effect on a patient who generally fears the evil eye is almost hypnotic even when the doctor is not in a trance. As a result, even stubborn patients in the grip of a new hysteria stop their shrieking when startled by the appearance of such a figure in the hut. Without saying a word, the doctor grasps the upper arm of the patient (for male "zars" attack the shoulders first, squatting on the back of the patient like a baby on the mother's back). When the patient, usually a woman, has been sufficiently subdued by the stare, the doctor loosens his grip and lightly begins to caress the upper arm and shoulder. This shows that he is unafraid to make contact with the spirit and that the situation is well in hand.

X794 756 A male zar doctor had, in the recent past, a place of honor at the table of feudal chiefs who often consulted them - perhaps more because of the doctors' knowledge of humans and public opinion than because of their spirit world. Even today, the social status and income of a zar doctor in rural areas and provincial towns is high, and he can afford such expensive European attire and apparel as a folding umbrella, laced shoes, a ring of silver or gold, etc. He may break rules of politeness, even utter mild insults and commit familiarities without

so that the patient "does not get hurt" in the violent twirling (such as "miss" protect a wife against her husband). The zar spirit appreciates these acknowledgements and is thus open to negotiations, especially during the "honeymoon".

Only rarely does a male zar "possess" a male human. In this case it is considered not very difficult to come to terms with him and turn him into a protective spirit, through regular financial sacrifices, special attire, and other physical adjustments. Zar doctors seek out powerful male zars whom they need as protective and guiding spirits in their profession. Powerful warriors who have seemed to have a charmed life are believed under such protection - which makes a male more masculine. Consistently successful thieves who always seem to elude capture are believed to be under such protection. This is said to frighten even the police (or at least offers a ready alibi).

A patient under active treatment by a "zar" doctor is called "tamami" (lit. the one being cared for). The first step in the procedure is the diagnosis, i.e. the identification of the specific zar personality that has possessed the patient. This is usually done at night, for the "zar" hide in daytime and roam at night - their element.

When darkness has fallen, the patient is brought to the hut of the zar doctor. Here the zar disciples, mostly women, are assembled, seated quietly, perhaps talking in subdued tones, or spinning cotton thread. Incense is burning, there is a low, rythmic drum beat, occasionally broken by chants accompanied by rythmic handclapping. Member after member rises individually, "when the spirit moves her" and begins to perform her "gurri", with slight variations according to her particular zar. The "gurri" is a movement that begins with the shoulders (typical

794 of Amhara dancing), while the performer is yet seated, and continues
755 while she rises. Head and shoulders move forward and backward, sometimes
535 in horizontal direction, sometimes rotating clockwise, sometimes counterclockwise. Nearing the orgiastic climax, the possessed proceeds to twirl like a top, faster and faster, until she drops in a heap. Habitues can go on for 20 minutes, and be ready for another movement an hour later.

While watching this over and over again, the patient may herself in time be moved to do likewise, though at first clumsily. This is a good sign, for it means that her zar has consented to dismount from his "riding" position, and is beginning to "descend" into the possessed person itself. The "gurri" is regarded as the "victory dance" of the zar, much like a hunter who has wounded and felled his deer. There is a strong element of struggle in the "gurri" dance, like the frantic death-
[83] throes of an animal about to surrender its individual existence. It is also the climax of the magical coitus (much like the bride who is "conquered" on her wedding night).

794 The patient is now in a trancelike state, considered in communica-
755 tion and partly identified with the zar, but yet open to urgings by the doctor. More incense is burned, close by, to make the new and as-yet unidentified zar feel cozy and put him in a benevolent, cooperative mood. Great care must be taken prior to the diagnosis. For this reason no poetry is sung to him and no gift given as yet, for the wrong king might insult him - he insists on his own, individual cult. When the patient dances subsequent "gurri", the zar doctor becomes increasingly certain whether the zar is male, or female, evil or mischievous, "neglected" or offended.

X 794 755 535 The specific personality and identity of the zar is revealed later during the course of the diagnosis, when the zar, using the body of the patient, dances the "fukkara" dance. This is considered the equivalent of the "boasting dance" of the Amhara warrior on the eve of battle, which goes by the same name. Thus the zar reveals his "färäs sem" (war name; lit. horse name, i.e. knighthood name), much like an Amhara feudal knight. Since formal "boasting" is highly individualistic, this means that the zar has come out of hiding, like a warrior who emerges from ambush. The dance itself is just as individualistic and irregular, therefore called "dankira", and may include the brandishing of sticks (as if they were spears) or jumping up and down.

X 794 755 Once the patient has proceeded to such expressive behavior, the zar doctor claims that he "knows" the identity of the zar. The doctor now asks the zar a series of leading questions, and the patient usually does not fail to respond with the "truthful" answers. Finally the name of the zar is openly proclaimed. Certain zars are stubborn, hide their identity in various subterfuges, so that the battle of wits between the zar doctor and the zar is a lengthy and difficult one. But the former nearly always wins out and announces his diagnosis.

Thereupon the zar doctor proceeds to decide what course of treatment to follow. The zar is asked, through the mouth of the patient, what [782] offense has been committed against him; what he would like to receive as "mäqwädäsha" love-gift in order to "pardon" the iniquity, or as damages for the "insult" or "neglect". Finally the zar is asked what he will demand in regular offerings in order to remain on good terms with the possessed, to plague her less and only at regular intervals, and, perhaps, to become her protective spirit. On the basis of the replies, the patient is

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assessed membership fees in the zar congregation headed by that particular zar doctor. The patient thus becomes a devotee of the zar ("yäzar wəlaj").

Demands of the individual zars range from very simple to very complex. If he is a light-colored zar, he may demand the annual sacrifice of a light-colored goat; if dark, of a black goat. Frequently the demand includes personal attire for the possessed, such as certain trinkets, glass bead necklaces, metal hairpins, specific hairstyles - all of them attention-getters. The zar warns that he will come and check on the observance of these demands from time to time, and punish any shortcomings with severe suffering.

Sacrifices, "derka", in which a goat or a chicken is slaughtered, are at least partly consumed by the patient (through whom the zar consumes the donation). Sometimes several sacrifices have to be observed as part of one "mäqwädäsha", to appease weaker zar spirits that linger about the more powerful ones, awaiting a vulnerable moment in which to pounce upon the patient, unless pacified.

Some zars are vegetarian, require ablutions in vegetable water, in which mashed vegetables and chewed "chat" ("qat", a drugplant) have been mixed; others perversely like the bitter vermifuge plant kosso and insist that it be placed in the coffee consumed by the possessed patient; still others have made the lemon or the sycamore their symbol.

More zars are carnivorous. One whose symbol (resembling a totem) is a lion, will demand the sacrifice of a tawny-colored goat, or demand that one of that color be kept in sight at all times so that he can "look" at it. For zars are very fond of using their sight. The wild animals of the bush are considered the "cattle" of the zar, and some

794 776 755 [829] specialize in "drinking" magically the milk of the lioness or female elephant, etc. When zars appear in dreams, cats and jackals often represent female zars, snakes male zars. But the animals are merely forms which the zars assume temporarily, while the zar spirits themselves retain their demanding-protective identity permanently.

[756] Some zar doctors are considered far more experienced, clever, or specialized than others, so that stubborn cases are referred to them. One of the most stubborn is the zar of epilepsie, called "barya" (lit. Barya tribesman, hence, slave). This zar is believed to have his home in the Nilotic lowlands below the northwest escarpment, a desert and near-desert area inhabited by the Barya people. There this zar is believed in contact with "ganyen" (djinn), from whom he has acquired his evil character. Prognosis in this case is more limited, and all the zar doctor can do is to negotiate an agreement with "barya" to afflict the patient less frequently. Even the diagnosis is difficult, for the patient often has to be restrained, even tied up, and special herbs and procedures are required.

Another difficult case is the patient possessed by several different zars at the same time, which confuses the diagnosis. In this case, the cleverness, experience and diplomacy of the diagnostician are severly taxed, to unravel the tangle, and treat each zar without insulting and neglecting any of the others. The usual procedure is to appease the most powerful one, e.g. "awolye", first, and enlist him as guardian spirit against the others. A really powerful and arrogant zar doctor can go so far as to attempt to treat the personalities of the minor zars themselves. Thus he may give them a severe talking to

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

X794 T76 .355

(actually directed at the patient), and "train" the minor zars to do their individual "gurri" somewhat differently, more "correctly". This "training" may include occasional beating of the "horse" of the zar (the patient).

Another advanced and complicated technique used by highly experienced zar doctors, in certain stubborn cases, is to transfer a stubborn zar from one patient of the zar congregation to a "stronger" member, so that the effect will be more controllable. This transfer is made on the principle of contagion. But a zar doctor is not supposed to inoculate a person with a really evil zar, for that would make him a sorcerer and set both the chief zar doctors and mankind in general against him.

Only in case of such a completely evil zar does the zar doctor attempt complete exorcism, considered a very dangerous form of spiritual surgery. During a somber ceremony, which lacks the gaiety of the usual [782] zar society, a black hen is killed, the evil zar is lured to feed on the body of the bloody animal, and the cadaver is quickly thrown in the bush, a thicket, or the river. This transfer is called "danqara", is tangential to the zar cult, and more related to "buda" and "tanqway" complexes (described later).

[787] Occasionally an old and experienced zar doctor, especially if a man, is asked to perform divination. If his personal zar happens to be "adept at prophecy", especially if he has been "educated at Jerusalem", the zar doctor may agree to put the question before him.

X794 T76 821

Seasonal variations are considered very important in treatment procedures, for the zar spirits are regarded to be as much dominated by the climate as are humans. They are dormant or inactive during the 3-month

zar doctor, preferably a woman like Woyzäro Sälämtew. The zar complex, to the Amhara mind, represents the shadow side of the visible human world, making it complete. Hence, just as the Coptic Christian (and also the Muslim) church emphasizes the male-dominated, patriarchal side of society, so does the zar complex represent the obverse, the female-dominated, matriarchal side of society.

This is further reinforced by the subordinate socio-psychological position of the Amhara woman. She may not enter the church. Her daily labors are largely limited to routine, manual, monotonous tasks. Only noblewomen are exempt from this social position of the "commoner" female, and therefore are not found in the zar cult - which therefore has a lower-class connotation in the basically two-class Amhara society.

Socially undistinguished, "commoner" Amhara women who chafe under their social inferiority, including women of potential talent repressed in their culture, are likely to develop ailments such as melancholia, apathy, catatonic states, migraine, or hysteria. Thus the zar doctor is called in and the patient enters the zar society.

The socio-psychological improvement, even apart from medical considerations, which the woman experiences as member of a zar-devotee society, is considerable. Once her individual "zar" has been diagnosed, she has acquired an individual "self" which is respected, acknowledged, at first within, and finally even outside the zar society. For the zar society emphasizes individualism, free expression, individual enterprise; as against the outside Amhara world which suppresses it in commoners, especially in the Amhara woman. The business enterprise of the female zar doctor and many devotees has already been described.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

world. Some are purely descriptive, like the notion that *budā* turn into hyenas after dark or ride hyenas like horses, or the belief that when red spots appear on the side of a clay pot when it is heated over a fire it means that the *ṭayb* who made the pot are fighting each other. Others guide him in warding off the evil ones, such as the idea that evil spirits can be kept away when a female child has been born by placing something of iron at the head of the mother's bed. But for serious trouble—when someone has been afflicted by a *zār* or infected by a *budā*—the folk wisdom does not suffice, and a specialist is sought.

The *ṭanquāy*, or "sorcerer," is consulted for exorcising demons as well as for physical ailments. In treating a *zār* patient his task is to discern, by clever interrogation, what manner of *zār* is riding the patient and then to determine what sort of gift is required to propitiate this *zār*. For a patient who has been "eaten" by the evil eye, he may succeed in summoning the guilty *budā*—identified when the patient calls out his name during a trance—and inducing him to spit on his victim; or he may resort to such techniques as transferring the demon from the victim to the body of a chicken and then killing the chicken. The *ṭanquāy* has other supernatural powers. He can summon the devil to liquidate the enemy of a client. He can interpret dreams and predict the future. For this he boils coffee, burns incense, and, sitting on a white sheepskin with freshly cut grass spread about the room, speaks out whatever comes to him.

The *ḍabtarā*, thanks to his knowledge of books and the lore acquired sub rosa while attending the church schools, wields many more powers than does the *ṭanquāy*. He can write amulets to keep away sickness and evil spirits. He knows formulas that can protect one from bullets and instill insatiable passion in the breast of one's beloved. He has the power to bring rain or make it stop, and to plague the householder by turning all of his possessions against him. Like the *ṭanquāy*, his expert knowledge of plants and herbs can heal the sick or poison the client's enemy. His superiority over the *ṭanquāy* is shown by the different manner in which he arranges a divination: he consults his heavy books, brews and interprets leaves, and then writes out his predictions on paper. For all this the *ḍabtarā*'s fees are usually higher, but his status is perhaps more precarious, for he is after all a man of the church. The peasant feels none too easy in dealing with one who both serves the church and deals with devils.

Time and Space[7]

Devils, *zār*, evil eye, and sorcery are hidden in the crevices of Amhara mentality. They are spoken of, if at all, somewhat fearfully, and some Amhara pretend that such things no longer exist or are of little account in their culture. The sacred spirits, on the other hand, loom large in the public mind.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

pleasure among the Amhara, but also as a typical response to situations which arouse anxiety. The crisis of death is met first of all by a prolonged ritual of wailing, and this is followed by a series of memorial feasts which occur on fixed days following the person's death. Any kind of bad news evokes repeated exclamations of "Ay! Ay!" When a child or wife is punished, the response is a prolonged and monotonous yell usually out of proportion to the actual pain felt. In the anxious hour before battle, war chants and boastful cries tune up the warriors' spirits. Moments of great awe, finally, such as the appearance of the holy ark when it is brought out of the church or the arrival of some great political personage, occasion a shrill ululation.

Response to illness was the anxiety area chosen as an index of positive fixation by Whiting and Child in their cross-cultural study of *Child Training and Personality*. They assumed that a fixation on oral gratification would express itself in a preference for therapies which involve swallowing something.[13] In this area, too, Amhara culture displays a preoccupation with orality, and not just in the form of swallowing. Something akin to a general principle for oral therapy appears in the well-known Amharic proverb: "For headache, shout on it! For stomach-ache, eat on it!"

A number of the oral therapies practiced by the Amhara are naturally functional, such as drinking a purgative made from leaves of the *kosso* tree to cure tapeworm, or eating a kind of unleavened corn bread to arrest dysentery. Beyond this, most of their magical therapies are also oral. Drinking holy water (and sometimes bathing in it) is believed to cure nearly every sort of affliction, from rheumatism and leprosy to eye and ear ailments. In some regions it is believed that eating the liver of a hyena will cure syphilis. Psychotherapy, too, often relies on oral remedies: the *zār* on a patient is often placated by feeding him, via the patient, a sumptuous meal. Oral types of prophylaxis are also to be noted. Garlic is eaten in order to prevent malaria. Certain kinds of animals are eaten on special occasions in order to ward off sickness. Finally, there is the remarkable phenomenon of the *lālibalā*, a night singer, who can protect himself against hereditary leprosy only by singing out loud in the night air.

In general, one can say that the Amhara have a tendency to attribute magical efficacy to oral incorporation and, to a lesser extent, to the adroit use of language. The latter belief appears in the assumption that human problems are solved by attaining some particularly fortunate verbal formulation, and in the association of outstanding wisdom with unusual mastery of language. The former appears in beliefs and legends which associate eating a lot with the attainment of unusual bravery, longevity, and physical strength. A legend about the invader Ahmad Grāñ, for example, relates that as a baby he was able to consume fourteen bowls of *ĭnjarā* at one sitting. A num-

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[For information on magical and mental therapy, see category 116, pp. xix, 6, 11, 23-26, 57, 73-80, 87-89, 96-99, 156-171, 174-175, 182, 185, 190-195, 202, 208-210, 223-236, 240-241, and 246-249.]